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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/RPM, INR
DEFENSE FOR OSD/POLICY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [HR](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: MOD REPLACES ASSISTANT MINISTER WHO SIGNED EUCOM
MOU

REF: A. 04 ZAGREB 2059
[B.](#) 04 ZAGREB 2002

¶1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: The Ministry of Defense (MOD) has relieved Dr. Jelena Grcic-Polic from her duties as Assistant Minister of Defense for Defense Policy. She has been replaced by Igor Pokaz, the head of international defense cooperation under Grcic-Polic. While the MOD has reported the move as a routine rotation, the press has characterized Grcic-Polic as the first casualty of the conflict between Minister of Defense Berislav Roncevic and President Stjepan Mesic over the GOC-EUCOM MOU on military exercises (reftels).

Her departure has been rumored for several months. It appears the MOU, which Grcic-Polic signed last summer on behalf of the GoC, is simply a convenient justification. Post had an excellent working relationship with Pokaz in his previous position and will work closely with him on key defense reform issues. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

¶2. During her two-year tenure, Grcic-Polic is widely credited with speeding up necessary reforms within the Croatian Armed Forces to prepare for NATO integration. A career diplomat, she had previously served as Croatia's deputy permanent representative to the UN and as Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs. She is expected to return to the MFA.

¶3. Igor Pokaz is also a career diplomat and has served in Croatia's observer mission to the EU and in the permanent mission to the UN. He holds a degree in economics and graduate degrees in international relations from Tufts and Oxford. Pokaz's reputation during his MOD assignment, which began in 2003, has been outstanding and his military pedigree is solid - his father was a career JNA officer who was promoted to general in the Croatian Armed Forces after independence and served as one of country's first military attaches.

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